

In the specification:

Page 1, please delete lines 1-13 and substitute therefor:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

The invention described and claimed hereinbelow is also described in German Patent Application DE 103 53 836.4 filed on November 18, 2003. This German Patent Application, whose subject matter is incorporated here by reference, provides the basis for a claim of priority of invention under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d).

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a fire alarm. Fire alarms are used for the early detection of fire in fire-prone areas, to protect individuals and assets. Fire alarms are typically installed on ceilings and have a round, white housing with a diameter of approximately 10 cm and a height of approximately 7 cm to 10 cm. Due to its function, the housing rests against the ceiling. Fire alarms are industrial, series-production products, and fire alarms of the same type and that are made by the same manufacturer typically look the same. In public traffic areas, the fire alarm on the ceiling is typically recognized immediately as a fire alarm due to the size of its housing. The uniformity of series production and the housing

shape are therefore always a compromise between the function of the fire alarm and the user's taste, and the aesthetics of the surroundings.

Page 2, cancel line 15 and substitute therefor:

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Cancel paragraph bridging pages 2 and 3 and substitute therefor:

The fire alarm designed according to the present invention offers the advantage of universal usability, since it can be adapted to practically any type of surroundings in a simple, cost-effective manner. To this end, the fire alarm has a covering cap which is connectable with the housing of the fire alarm and closes the housing such that it is flush with the ceiling. The covering cap has a recess into which pre-stamped sheets can be inserted before the covering cap is placed on the housing of the fire alarm. Sheets of this type can be manufactured economically, in a large variety of color-fast shades. To ensure that the sheet is visible, the covering cap is preferably designed to be transparent. The fire alarm is preferably designed, as a series-production product, as an installation set that includes sheets in colors typically found in living spaces. The housing and covering cap are preferably connectable with each other via a detent

or clip connection. In a further embodiment, a Velcro closure can also be provided. Detachable connecting means of this type provide a secure hold for the covering cap on the housing of the fire alarm. They also make it possible for the covering cap to be easily removed for replacement of a sheet and to be reconnected with the housing. To enable an optimal color match, even in challenging surroundings, the material and shape of the covering cap can help facilitate the color match. For example, a slightly convex shape of the covering cap can enhance the impression that shades of color transition in a visually-pleasing manner. In addition, the covering cap can also have a slight mat finish on all or at least part of its surface to further enhance this impression. As a result of the measures mentioned above, the differences between adjacent areas with different surface structures and colors blend. It is particularly rational to design the sheets to have different colors and/or different surface designs on either side. As a result, an even greater variety of color is provided in the accessories set. It is also possible, of course, to provide a replaceable sheet with a neutral color, which can be painted at the installation site, thereby enabling it to be adaptable exactly to the surroundings. Fire alarm inserts can also be used that do not cover the edge of the base when inserted in the base. In this case, the edge of the base itself can be covered with a faceplate. In this case as well, the faceplate can be designed such that it is easily removed for insertion of a sheet. Advantageously, the covering cap and/or faceplate can also be designed

as templates to be used to cut covering material to fit. As a result, covering material that matches the surroundings can be cut to fit at the installation site and inserted in the covering cap instead of a sheet. In a further embodiment, a sheet with a contrast color that deviates significantly from the surroundings can also be used, of course, if this is desired for interior-design reasons. Special optical effects can be attained as a result. This high degree of flexibility is made possible by the means of attaining the object, according to the present invention.

Page 3, cancel line 25.

Page 3, after line 27 insert:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Page 4, cancel line 3 and substitute therefor:

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT